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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

Memorandum



THE SITUATION IN SOUTH VIETNAM

(Information as of 0730 EST)

6 Nov 63

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1. The South Vietnamese coup leaders have formalized their control of the regime with the appointment of a 12-man Military Executive Committee which will be the highest authority in the country. It is headed by "Big" Minh, with Tran Van Don and Ton That Dinh as vicechairman. There are offices for political, economic, military, security, and foreign affairs, and four members-at-large.

2. Appointment of a new consultative council, to draft a new constitution, supervise elections, and concern itself broadly with matters which would normally come before the disbanded national assembly, is expected to be announced soon. It is to be headed by former Dai Viet opposition leader Dr. Phan Huy Quat.

3. Quat has characterized the regime as being mainly southern, in contrast to Diem's preference for officials originally from the north. He says that many of the new appointees are good technicians, but there are few capable administrators, and appointment in many cases appears to have resulted from personal friendship with either Minh or Premier Tho. Most of these technicians began their careers under French colonial administration, are described by some observers as "steeped in the French tradition" of government, and while not necessarily pro-French, are probably innately open to French example and influence.
the new provisional government as 70 percent pro-French.

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4. General Mai Huu Xuan, the new power in the police and intelligence community, is moving rapidly to purge the security systems of Diem elements and replace them with his own men.

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5. Two former subordinates of Ton That Dinh are about to be named to command the corps areas immediately north and south of Saigon, which will further strengthen Dinh's power position. On the other hand a reported move to transfer the administration of rural affairs and the strategic hamlet program from Dinh's Ministry of Security to the civilian-led Ministry of Agriculture could be designed by rival generals to begin trimming Dinh's authority. The strategic hamlets, in an effort to expunge the taint of Nhu and his dialectics, are henceforth to be called "fortified hamlets."

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7. The tempo of Viet Cong activity is picking up, [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] On Sunday and Monday alone there were about 60 military incidents--small-scale attacks and probing actions--largely in the delta. So far, however, there are no indications that the dislocations accompanying the coup created any major vulnerabilities in the South Vietnamese military posture.

8. There was a grenade explosion in the Saigon dock area Tuesday morning, probably set off by the Viet Cong, which wounded 13 Vietnamese. Further urban terrorist attempts can be expected.

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10. According to press reports, Madame Nhu has apparently decided she wants to remain in the United States, and has asked that her three younger children be brought here from Rome.

11. A report on world reaction to the South Vietnamese developments will be issued separately this morning.

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